

Berea School of Theology and Ministries on Internet

© 2003-2015



Maranatha – Jesus Comes Soon

Text and illustration choice by

Reverend Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.



Advent and Christmas 2014 Meditation

The Messiah-Servant and His Mission (Isaiah 49:1-4)

For Jesus Christ to be the World Saviour, he had to fulfil a special mission. In the words of the Old Testament lessons, the prophet Isaiah speaks in chapter 49 of CHRIST'S GLORIOUS MISSION. It is a mission to which he was solemnly appointed. It is a worldwide mission. It is a mission that gives all glory to God.

Christ's appointment to his mission was made even before he was born. In our text Isaiah quotes the Messiah "Christ" as saying, "Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name." "Christ Jesus did not enter upon his glorious mission on his own. He did not make the decision to come and be the Saviour of the world. He was appointed to that mission by God himself. God chose his Son to be the Saviour of the world. Jesus merely consented to do the will of his Father.

Jesus was appointed to his mission even before he was born. Before Jesus was born, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her, "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High." [Luke 1:31-32] To Joseph, the foster father of the Saviour, Gabriel said, "She (Mary) will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." [Matthew 1:21]

The glorious mission of Jesus Christ was spelled out already in his name. He was called Jesus, a name that means Saviour. Christ (Messiah) came into this world, was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary so that he could be the Saviour of all people.

God the Father prepared Christ for his glorious mission. Christ, through the prophet Isaiah, speaks of this preparation. "And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me." (Verse 2) When we think of a sword, we usually think of power, military power in particular. Jesus power did not consist of a huge, well-armed army who did his bidding. Jesus power was in his words. Many people who heard Jesus made the remark, "No one ever spoke the way this man does." [John 7:46]

What Jesus spoke was the very Word of God. For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any doubled-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the

heart. [Hebrews 4:12] As a sharp sword can easily cut a person and separate his flesh from his bones, so the Word of God cuts deep into a person's heart. When the Word of God is preached and applied, as Jesus did, it separates those things that do not belong in the heart from those which do belong.

The Word cuts deep into our heart. It tells us what we don't want to hear. It tells us that we have sinned and it condemns us for our sins. It cuts away all excuses that we might give for our sinful actions and words. That is the Word which Christ Jesus spoke to the people.

Isaiah uses another picture to describe the word which Christ spoke. He made me like a polished arrow and hid me in his quiver. The picture is that of an arrow whose shaft is smooth and straight and whose head is razor sharp. Such an arrow will quickly leave the bow, fly straight to its target and penetrate deep into the flesh of its intended victim.

God had made Christ to possess such penetrating power. The people who saw Jesus, heard him speak, and viewed his life, were cut to the heart. His holy life made them keenly aware of their own sinfulness. His holy life reminded them that they stood condemned before the all holy God.

As we read the Gospel accounts of the life of Christ, we also are cut to the heart. His holy and perfect life stands in direct contrast to our sinfulness. His great love exposes our selfishness. His perfect obedience condemns our disobedience. Christ, by his word and holy life shows us how desperately we need his glorious mission.

Although God appointed Christ for his mission and prepared him for it, God hid him. Christ did not immediately begin his glorious mission. God hid him in the obscurity of childhood and early manhood. The Bible tells us very little about the early life of Jesus. But at God's appointed time, God publicly declared Christ to be the Saviour of the world. He did this at the baptism of Jesus. There in a voice from heaven God said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." [Matthew 3:17]

From that time on Christ and his word were no longer hid in obscurity. Jesus began his public ministry. He went around from place to place preaching and teaching. Today Christ is openly revealed in the Word. He is openly revealed so that all can know of his glorious mission, a mission that is worldwide in scope. A mission that includes all people.

Christ's worldwide mission was to bring Jacob back to him and to gather Israel to him. Christ's first and main task was to gather the lost sheep of Israel [Matthew 15:24]

God had promised the patriarchs and his people that the Saviour would come from their descendants and that he would work in their midst. When Jesus came, he came as the fulfilment of that promise. When Christ began his public ministry he did so among the Jews. He spent three years of his ministry travelling the length and breadth of Palestine. When he sent out his disciples on a missionary tour he told them "Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel." [Matthew 10:6]

Although Christ laboured among his own people, we hear him say, "I have worked in vain; I have spent my strength uselessly and for nothing." The Apostle John put it this way. "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him." [John 1:11] The vast majority of the Jews among whom Jesus worked did not accept him as the promised Savior. They rejected him and his word. In their rejection, they plotted to get rid of Jesus. In due time they carried out their plot. They crucified him.

Not all who heard Jesus rejected him. There were many who believed on him. They saw in Jesus Christ the fulfilment of all the Old Testament promises of the Saviour. Some did not fully understand his glorious mission, but they were willing to learn of that mission from him.

Christ's mission was not to end just with the Jews. His mission included the Gentiles. The Lord said to his Servant, "It is too insignificant for you to be only my Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back those in Israel whom I have preserved, I have also made you a Light for the Gentiles so that my salvation might reach to the ends of the earth." The salvation God had planned was for the world. It wasn't limited to one group of people. It was to encompass all people. While the majority of Christ's ministry was spent among his own people, it also included the Gentiles. We think for example of such people as the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, the Syrophoenician woman, and the Centurion of Capernaum. Before his ascension Jesus told his disciples to preach the good news of salvation to all people. The Book of Acts tells us how the disciples carried out that mission.

How grateful we ought to be that Christ's glorious mission includes all people. If Christ had come only for the Jews, we would be excluded. There would be no salvation for us. We would not have the forgiveness of sins. Without the forgiveness of sins, there is no entrance into heaven. We would be condemned

to spend all eternity in hell. But thanks be to God, Christ's glorious mission includes all people. It includes us.

Christ's glorious mission is not to stop with us. We are to see to it that others hear of his glorious mission. Like the disciples we are to tell the good news of salvation to everyone.

The glorious mission of Christ gives all glory to God. In our text we hear God say, "You are my Servant, Israel, through whom I will be glorified." Christ's mission is such that those who are saved cannot take any credit for their being saved. God has done everything for the salvation of mankind. He sent his Son into this world. He placed on him the sins of all people. He declares that all people are now justified through faith in Christ Jesus. We have done nothing for our salvation. We can do nothing for it. Even the act of accepting God's salvation does not originate with us. It is God who sent his Holy Spirit into our hearts. It was the Holy Spirit who brought us to faith and keeps us in the faith.

All praise and glory belongs to God and to his Son and not to us. Our entire lifetime is not enough time to thank and praise God for our salvation. All eternity is too short a time to render God all the thanks and praise due him for our salvation. One poet put it this way. Maranatha, Jesus comes. A blessed Christmas to everyone.

© December 2014 – Rev. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D., Berea School of Theology and Ministries on Internet, Ghent, Belgium.



First Advent Meditation

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold:" Alluding to the custom of kings leaning on the arm of their most beloved and faithful servant. All, both Jews and Christians, agree, that the seven first verses of this chapter belong to Christ. Now, as they are evidently a continuation of the prophecy in the preceding chapter, that prophecy cannot belong to Cyrus, but to Christ.

We read further in Isaiah 42:5-7

1: Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2: He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street.

3: A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

4: He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law. (Isaiah 42:1-4)

5: Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein:

6: I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

7: To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.



Second Advent Meditation

I understand verse 8 of the Gentiles (unbelievers), as the verse following, not of the Jews. Their natural faculties, if they had made a proper use of them, must have led them to the knowledge of the being and attributes of the one true God; "for his eternal power and Godhead," if well attended to, are clearly seen in his works, (Romans 1:20), and would have preserved them from running into the folly and absurdity of worshipping idols. They are here challenged to produce the evidence of the power and foreknowledge of their idol gods; and the Jews are just afterwards, Isaiah 43:10, appealed to as witnesses for God in this cause, therefore these latter cannot here be meant by the people blind with eyes and deaf with ears.

**Bring forth the blind people that have eyes,
and the deaf that have ears.**

(Isaiah 43: 8)

"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Romans 1:20)



Third Advent Meditation

The love we cannot effectively give, the love that most among us don't even want to give becomes possible when our lives are given over to the Lord, the Prince of Peace. He is the God of miracles who can and will change you and me for the better, in ways we will actually like. We are given amazing words of love in Isaiah, written hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus, who was to die a terrible death as the remedy for our sins. He said, "I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

Modern scholars say that the crucifixion did not involve the hands, but instead the terrible nails going through the wrists. But it was revealed to Isaiah the prophet that the "hands" of our Saviour would be pierced for our sins. It was also revealed to David, who foretold the thought of Jesus: "They have pierced My hands and feet" (Psalm 22:16). They tied His wrists to the wood and pierced His hands with nails. He literally loved you to death, His death, and He did it so you will become able to love.

Dear Lord, forgive my selfishness, my refusal to love as You have intended. I cannot do it by myself, Lord; I can only come to You and say – please help me. Thank You for loving me so much that You died for me. I surrender myself to you right now. I believe, you are my Lord and Saviour. Amen.



Fourth Advent Meditation

(Isaiah 52:15)

Kings shall shut their mouths at him – His Gospel shall so prevail that all opposition shall be finally overcome; and kings and potentates shall be overwhelmed with confusion, and become speechless before the doctrines of his truth. When they hear these declared they shall attentively consider them, and their conviction of their truth shall be the consequence.

For that which had not been told them – The mystery of the Gospel so long concealed. See Romans 15:21; Romans 16:25.

Shall they see – With the eyes of their faith; God enlightening both organ and object.

And that which they had not heard – The redemption of the world by Jesus Christ; the conversion of the Gentiles, and making them one flock with the converted Jews.



**Fifth Advent Meditation
Isaiah 54:1**

**The radiant joy of being
"born again" in Christ
(John 3:16)**

The Blessing of the Converted in Christ

Subsequent to the Cross of Christ is the singing of the redeemed. In Isaiah 54, verse 1: Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear "Shout for joy, O thou barren, that didst not bear." The Church of God under the Old Testament, confined within the narrow bounds of the Jewish nation, and still more so in respect of the very small number of true believers, and which sometimes seemed to be deserted of God her husband, is the barren woman, that did not bear, and was desolate. She is exhorted to rejoice, and to express her joy in the strongest manner, on the reconciliation of her husband, (see Isaiah 54:6;), and on the accession of the Gentiles to her family. The converted Gentiles, you and me, are all along considered by the prophet as a new accession of adopted children, admitted into the original Church of God, and united with it. See Isaiah 49:20, Isaiah 49:21.

God's Covenant of Peace never departs



**Sixth Advent Meditation
Isaiah 54:11
The Radiant Joy of restored Israel**

**Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours,
and lay thy foundations with sapphires.**

These seem to be general images to express beauty, magnificence, purity, strength, and solidity, agreeably to the ideas of the eastern nations; and to have never been intended to be strictly scrutinized, or minutely and particularly explained, as if they had each of them some precise, moral, or spiritual meaning. Tobit (*Apocrypha*), in his prophecy of the final restoration of Israel, describes the New Jerusalem in the same oriental manner: "For Jerusalem shall be built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stones; thy walls, and towers, and battlements, with pure gold. And the streets of Jerusalem shall be paved with beryl, and carbuncle, and stones of ophir." Tob. 13:16, 17. Compare also Revelation 21:18-21.



Seventh Advent Meditation Blessing promised to non-Israelites:

The sons of the stranger - The Gentiles.

Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant! (Isaiah 55: 6)

That join themselves to the Lord - Who shall enter into the Christian covenant by baptism and faith in Christ, as the Jews and proselytes did by circumcision.

To serve him - To live according to the Gospel, and ever do that which is right in the sight of the Lord.

To love the name of the Lord - The name of Jesus, the Christ, the Saviour of sinners, the Anointed of God, and the Giver of the Holy Spirit to his followers.

To be his servants - To worship no other God but Jehovah, and to trust in none for salvation but his Christ.

That keepeth the Sabbath - That observes it as a type of the rest that remains for the people of God.

And taketh hold of my covenant - "Of my covenant sacrifice (Calvary's Cross);" as without this he can do nothing good; and without it nothing can be acceptable to the infinite majesty of the Most High.



Eighth Advent Meditation

Prophecy
Will be born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14)
Fulfilment
Was born of a virgin named Mary
(Luke 1:26-31)

The Apostles' Creed: "I believe in Jesus Christ who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary," points to a fundamental fact of the Christian faith: That in Jesus Christ, God became one of us. The New Testament clearly declares that the Virgin Birth actually happened in time and space. Matthew and Luke both tell the story as sober, historical reality. You can say it isn't true if you want to. But you can't deny that the Bible clearly teaches it. And you can't deny that the early church believed it. Furthermore, this doctrine has always been considered one of the fundamental doctrines of the faith. It is something that all Christians have always believed. Physically, how did the conception happen? Again, no one knows. Through some means unknown to us, during the "overshadowing" the Holy Spirit created within Mary's womb the unborn (yet fully human and fully alive) Person of Jesus Christ. It is a pure miracle of the highest order. No one can explain it or duplicate it. The Virgin Birth of Christ stands absolutely alone. Nothing can be compared to it because no other birth has been—or ever could be—like it. It's an unexplained miracle. Evangelicals of every stripe believe in the Virgin Birth. The Catholic Church strongly affirms this doctrine. So do the various Orthodox Churches. The only churches that don't believe it are the denominations that have capitulated to liberalism and politically-correct theology.



Ninth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will have a Galilean ministry (Isaiah 9:1,2)

Fulfillment

**Ministry began in Galilee of the Gentiles
(Matthew 4:13-16)**

Jesus appears to speak during the reading of the Prophets in the synagogue. He reads from Isaiah 61:1-2, a passage that promises the coming of God's salvation. His commentary, unlike most sermons, is brief, declaring simply, *"Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."* The claim is so great that we need to work through the elements of the Old Testament passage carefully. The passage starts with Jesus' claim that *"the Spirit of the Lord is on me."* Jesus claims to be directed by God to minister and preach. The Isaiah verses from long ago are being fulfilled in Jesus: *"The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."*



Tenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

**Will be an heir to the throne of David
(Isaiah 9:7; 11:1, 10)**

Fulfillment

**Was given the throne of His father David
(Luke 1:32, 33)**

Jesus of Nazareth legally inherited the 'throne of David' according to His flesh through the ancient 'royal bloodline' of King David by His mother Mary. The LORD GOD gave this 'throne of David' to Jesus at Birth. This made Jesus of Nazareth the King (Ruler) over the entire nation of Israel, and of His reign there shall be no end (Luke 1:31-33). Those Israelites of national Israel that accepted His reign are the true seed of Abraham, the Israel of God: His Israel, His Body, His Kingdom, His one sheepfold, His household of faith, His faithful and virtuous Bride which is His Church. The Gentiles ('nations') were later added by being grafted into this obedient and believing remnant Israel of God. These believers in Jesus Christ, who have been obedient to His Gospel of the New Covenant by grace through faith as found in Acts 2:4/Acts 2:38 (Jews) and Acts 10:44-48 (Gentiles), are now joint-heirs according to the promise (Romans 8:17). King Jesus reigns NOW upon the 'throne of David' over His Church, which is the Kingdom of God (Kingdom of Heaven).



Eleven Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will have His way prepared (Isaiah 40:3-5)

Fulfilment

**Was announced by John the Baptist
(John 1:19-28)**

An abrupt speech. Methinks I hear a voice. Wilderness - This immediately relates to the deliverance of the Jews out of Babylon, and smoothing their passage from thence to Judea, which lay through a great wilderness; but principally to their redemption by the Messiah, whose coming was ushered in by the cry of John the Baptist, in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way - You to whom this work belongs. He alludes to the custom of princes who send pioneers before them to prepare the way through which they are to pass. The meaning is, God shall by his spirit so dispose men's hearts, and by his providence so order the affairs of the world, as to make way for the accomplishment of his promise. This was eminently fulfilled, when Christ, who was, and is God, blessed for ever, came into the world in a visible manner.

The Damnable Religious World Today

God pity false prophets like as found in religious liberalism today, taking never a stand against sin. Today many clergymen are nothing more than greedy businessmen and motivation preachers, who are a disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ, our only Lord and Saviour. John the Baptist could have trimmed their sermons, turning a blind eye to Herod's adultery, avoiding telling people they needed to repent; but the forerunner told the truth. In sharp contrast, many clergymen today make one nauseous. They do not mention the word "repent" until after their sermons are over, as to avoid offending anyone. 2 Timothy 4:3. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Further: "And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not." The sad conclusion: It appears that most believers today have given up on the war against sin and evil.

The Advent like the Lenten is a call to Repentance and Newness of Life



Twelve Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be spat on and struck (Isaiah 50:6)

Fulfilment

Was spat on and beaten (Matthew 26:67)

Isaiah 50:6-11

Jesus says he offered his back to those who beat him and his cheeks. He did not hide his face from the mocking and spitting because the Lord God assists him. Jesus will not be disgraced nor shamed and will be set like a flint in his resolve to obey. The Lord God will vindicate him. Because the Lord God helps Jesus, let all who dare to accuse and condemn Jesus come forward. Christians not living according to God's Word, you are accusing Jesus, and live against God's Will. Unfaithful Christians, if you persist, you will be eaten by the moths. Rather, trust in the Lord and rely on God, fear and obey Him. All who light their own fire and walk in it will lie down in torment. Rely on God and His presence in your life. If you stay faithful to His Word, God will vindicate you. Do not be tempted to follow your path and not God's. For God is always there, whether we want Him to be or acknowledge Him or not. And, so it is.



Thirteenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be exalted (Isaiah 52:13)

Fulfilment

Was highly exalted by God and the People (Philippians 2:9, 10)

A humble birth – the Light of the world willing to live among us in a dark fallen world. His life-an example of obedience to a Heavenly Father. His ministry – power, healings and miracles. His love and compassion for those seeking relief from their heartache and sorrows. His perfect love for His Father and for each of us. His greatest act- His atoning sacrifice carried out on behalf of all mankind providing salvation to all willing to follow in His footsteps. His triumphant resurrection-a victory over death.

Eternal glory. Eternal promises. I can never get enough of learning and understanding what all our Saviour has done and is now accomplishing for this world and on our behalf. Yes, He arose now more than 2000 years ago. And many testified seeing Him in His glorified body.

For ages the promise has been long proclaimed – every eye will see Him coming in the clouds with power and great glory. Is that not an exciting thought! One day – maybe soon – we will witness the return of our risen Lord and King! Jesus saves and answers your prayers and yielding faith in Him.



Fourteenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be disfigured by suffering (Isaiah 52:14; 53:2)

Fulfilment

Was scourged by Roman soldiers who gave Him a crown of thorns (Mark 15: 15-19)

Our Lord Jesus suffered *all five kinds of wounds* known to medical science: *contusions* (through blows by a rod), *lacerations* (through scourging on His back), *penetrating wounds* (through crown of thorns on His head), *perforating wounds* (through nails on His hands and feet) and *incised wounds* (through spear on His side). It was for our transgressions, for our iniquities, and in order that we might have peace, in order that we might be healed. The truth is that we were the ones who went astray and who walked in self-will and Jehovah placed our iniquity on Him, the sinless substitute.

21: For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: 22: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. (1 Peter 2:21-24)

Have you taken advantage of His sufferings and death by accepting Him as your Lord and Saviour?

Advent is a time for renewal!



Fifteenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will make a blood atonement (Isaiah 53:5)

Fulfilment

Shed His blood to atone for our sins (1 Peter 1:2)

Away with Sin

The work of Messiah has provided every spiritual blessing for the believer opening up a new life, a new power and new possibilities. Christ's suffering was not for Himself. Our Lord suffered because of *our* sins. Christ was made a curse for you and for me. It was because of sin that He went to the cross. Our sin is the source of enmity with God. God's Word shows us how exceedingly sinful sin is and we must see that, lest we start tolerating and condoning sin. When you sin, think, "*That's what drove Christ to the cross.*" "So completely was Jesus bent upon saving sinners by the sacrifice of Himself, He created the tree upon which He was to die, and nurtured from infancy the men who were to nail Him to the accursed wood."



Sixteenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be widely rejected (Isaiah 53:1,3)

Fulfilment

Was not accepted by many (John 12:37, 38)

Jesus contrasted pious religious people who know they are sinners by telling a story about a (respected) Pharisee and a (despised) tax collector praying. The Pharisee stood upright and "prayed with himself." He told God how good he was, while the tax collector bowed and beat his chest, asking God for mercy. In Luke 18:14, the tax collector went home justified (declared righteous in God's eyes). Apparently the Pharisee merely went home with a good feeling. Although Jesus was rejected and put to death by the religious leaders of His day, many individuals did believe in Him and become God's children as John 1:12 states. As a biblical truths examiner, it can be observed that the Bible is relevant to today's culture. Truth always has opposition. Religious leaders still lead people astray with false doctrines. People continue to reject Jesus as their Messiah and Savior. We are faced with poignant questions that must be considered. Look unto Jesus only, and do not allow yourself to be trampled constantly by doubt and fear because of them. The only reality is your faith in Jesus Christ, and the reality of your courage.



Seventeenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will bear our sins and sorrows (Isaiah 53:4, 5)

Fulfilment

Died because of our sins (Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24, 25)

Most people believe that "eternal life" means "living forever." However, *length of life* is only one aspect of eternal life. Satan and the demons will live *forever*, but their *quality of life* is the farthest thing from desirable! They do not have quality of life, because they are in constant disagreement with God—the source of eternal life! Paul tells us in Romans 6:23 that God's gift is eternal life, and in John 17:3, Jesus defines that gift further: "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." God's gift, then, is a life wherein a person knows—understands, has experience with—the Father and the Son. The gift is a life that not only stretches on forever, but also has a spiritual quality that makes such length of days desirable! That eternal quality—that perfection in living—has its only source in God, and a relationship with that supreme Source is only possible when man's sins, the cause of the great gulf between man and God, are atoned for. For this reason, God sent His Son to pay the debt of mankind's sins, so that man might know the Father and the Son in an intimate relationship, and be able to live life as They live. God loves you always, especially when your heart is flooded with repentance, and when He sees your mind directed to His Son Jesus Christ. "O Lord, do give me the capacity to love you more than I love anything else."



Eighteenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be our substitute (Isaiah 53:6,8)

Fulfilment

Died in our place (Romans 5:6, 8;
2 Corinthians 5:21)

Isaiah introduces a confident majesty. The idea of a substitution now clearly comes to the foreground. He brings out the contrast between the righteous One and the sickness and grief of the many. The griefs and sorrows the divine Sufferer bears are not His own. The observers now realize the Sufferer is suffering because of His identification with them. He is not the target of divine wrath because of something He has done. He is dying as a substitute. He is dying on their behalf. The emphasis is on the pronoun "He." "He (Jesus Christ) bore" our griefs. He lifted up and carried away our griefs and sorrows. He lifted up our illnesses, he carried our pain. The divine Substitute takes the sin in its consequences that belong to us, lifts them up, i.e. loaded them upon Himself, and carries them away. What are the consequences of our sins? We live in a day when people want the freedom to do as they please, but they do not want the consequences of their choices. You are free to choose, but you are not free to choose your consequences. "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (1 Peter 2:24-25).



Nineteenth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will voluntarily accept our guilt and punishment
for sin (Isaiah 53:7,8)

Fulfilment

Jesus took on our sins (John 1:29; Romans 6:10;
2 Corinthians 5:21)

We are healed, redeemed, cleansed from all unrighteousness by the saving work of Christ on the Cross. Our peace was upon Him. There is no peace between us and our heavenly Father except in Christ. Paul wrote, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ...For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly ...being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:1-9). Christ did die for the sins of His chosen people. He came to redeem. He found His lost sheep and drew them to Himself. He continues to draw His sheep to His caring arms. His days are prolonged, for He has risen from the dead. His victory is assured. The ministry of Christ continues as the Gospel is faithfully proclaimed. He has poured out His soul on His cross for many. He has born our iniquities. He conquered death and the devil. He once suffered. He now reigns as our King. He is our Mediator. Let us give thanks as we continue to look to Him with faith and wonder.



Mass baptism by immersion at Yardeniet (Israel), believers' testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, Our Lord

And You?

Twentieth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Gentiles will seek Him (Isaiah 11:10)

Fulfilment

Gentiles came to speak to Jesus (John 12:20,21)

Gentile nations as a whole will one day come to Messiah's light, but not during this current age. In the age to come, when Messiah establishes His kingdom, then Gentiles will willingly seek out Messiah. National entities will recognize Messiah's righteous rule. But during the current preaching of the gospel, only a remnant of Gentiles will come to His light. Governmental structures will fail to recognize Jesus as the Messiah until He returns. Israel will be the first to come to Messiah's light. Gentile nations will be able to rejoice alongside Israel in this knowledge. But it will not happen through the current preaching of the gospel, or through Christian political activism. To believe that a Gentile nation could belong to the Messiah (i.e. be considered a Christian nation) before Messiah establishes His earthly rule is the error of Post-Millennialism. This is interesting because most of the founding fathers of our nation were Post-Millennialists. They viewed Europe and the United States as Christians nation believing that the preaching of the gospel through our missionary endeavour would bring Gentile nations as a whole to convert to Christ. Today, is the day, submit yourselves to Jesus Christ, our Saviour.



Mass baptism by immersion at Yardeniet (Israel), believers' testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, Our Lord (continued)

Twenty-first Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be silent before His accusers (Isaiah 53:7)

Fulfilment

Was silent before Herod and his court (Luke 23:9)

The practice of treating Christ, His church and His teachings as a vain curiosity is not new. Charles H. Spurgeon was well familiar with religious Herodites in his own day. In preaching about such people he says, "It is not likely that their knowledge of religious things will be of any use to them, but they are even eager after it; the church of God is their lounge, divine service is their theatre, ministers are to them as actors, and the gospel itself so much play-house property. They are a sort of religious Athenians, spending their time in nothing else than in hearing some new thing: hoping that perhaps some singular and unexpected discourse may be delivered in their hearing which they can retail in the next company where they would raise a laugh. To them preaching is all a farce, and, worked up with a few falsehoods of their own, it makes excellent fun for them, and causes them to be regarded as amusing fellows. Let them look at Herod, and see in him their leader, the type of what they really are or may soon become." Christ's enemies around the cross still had a lot to say to Him, but He had nothing more to say to them. As He stated at His trial, "If I tell you [who I am], you will not believe Me" (Luke 22:67). Jesus knew that anything He had to say would be like casting pearls before swine.

Jesus says that He, and only He, is the way, the truth, and the life leading to God the Father and that no one comes to the Father except through Him!



Twenty-second Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will save us who believe in Him (Isaiah 53:12)

Fulfilment

Provided salvation for all who believe
(John 3:16; Acts 16:31)

We have cut ourselves off from God by our sin but God has reached out to us in our dying states in order to rescue us through the sending of his Son. In short, Jesus has come to save us from our non-existent, dead relationship with God. As the one who is both fully human and fully God, he is our Mediator, our go between us and God; and He has come into the world for purpose of connecting us back to life with the Father. John's gospel tells us that "in him was life and the life was the light of men." So to be saved is to be raised from a dead state of being to that of life and fullness in God. That's what salvation is; it is being rescued from a state of death to that of life. This is what Jesus has done for us on the cross; he has saved us from death and brought us back to life with God. But you must put your faith in him in order to be saved. John's gospel tells us "But to all who received him, to all who believed in his name, he gave the power to become children of God."



Twenty-third Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will die with transgressors (Isaiah 53:12)

Fulfilment

Was numbered with the transgressors
(Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37)

Christian maturity is tested by its willingness to go against the odds, to go against intellectual and practical fashions in the service of our King. It is easy enough to be a Christian when being a Christian merely requires us to be nice people. But *love* for Jesus, that love which is motivated by his great sacrifice, requires far more. It calls upon us to renounce what Scripture calls the "wisdom of the world," the fashionable ideas and practices of our society, and to count them as rubbish for the sake of Christ. We honour those like Noah, who built his ark though the world scoffed; like Abraham, who set aside the evidence of his senses and the laughter of his own wife to believe that God would provide a miraculous son; like Moses, who stood up against Pharaoh the totalitarian despot to bring him the word of God; like Daniel, who endured lions rather than to worship an earthly king; like Peter and John, who told officials that "we must obey God, rather than man."



Twenty-fourth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

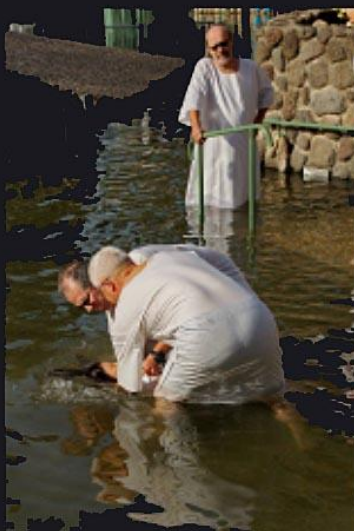
Will heal the brokenhearted (Isaiah 61:1,2)

Fulfilment

Healed the brokenhearted (Luke 4:18, 19)

Everyone has experienced a broken heart in their life and many have experienced it more than once. I wonder how many have ever reached to the one person (Father God) who can bring the necessary healing?

It's very apparent that there are many Christians who continue to walk around with a broken heart even though they know that God heals them. We know for certain as with the physical healing of broken bones or bleeding wounds, it is a process that requires time, the balm of Gilead, and the healing oil that only the Holy Spirit can provide. God is knitting our hearts back together again and along with the healing we are experiencing has come a deep desire to help bind up and comfort others who are brokenhearted. That's where my heart is. I have often suffered from a broken heart in the Christian ministry educating and ordaining people for well over 40 years and not that God has touched and healed it, I found myself running around wanting everyone to experience the healing that I have experienced, as well as the strength received from the Lord. My remedy was, "Look unto Jesus", and only unto Him. Again and again, I want to join my heart with the very heart of God to put His arms of love around every person that hurts. We the people of God must endeavour to do that together. We have a devastated nation and broken world. Relationships have been torn apart, families separated, and many are suffering loss. I believe that God is going to show us how to more effectively comfort those who mourn. We need to be a great witness for our wonderful Father who is seeking to heal ALL broken hearts through His Son Jesus Christ.



Twenty-fifth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

God's Spirit will rest on Him (Isaiah 11:2)

Fulfilment

**The Spirit of God descended on Jesus
(Matthew 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; 4:1)**

Isaiah 48:16 tells us that Christ came at the behest of Yahweh and His Spirit. Luke 1:35 tells us Jesus was conceived of the Spirit of God. We know that the Gospel's tell us that the Spirit descended and remained upon the Son of God. Here we have Isaiah's statement that the Spirit of God would rest on Him. Isaiah 61:1-4 tells us that the Spirit was resting upon Him in order to set people free and bring a manifestation of the good news that Christ was proclaiming. To our knowledge and firm conviction Jesus did not preach one sermon prior to his baptism in the Jordan. Neither did He perform any miracle. We have the sure statement concerning His personal knowledge and wisdom at the age of 12, and we also have the detail of Him being subject to His parents saying, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and with man" (Luke 2:52). I have to add a personal conviction; my understanding is that being conceived by the Holy Spirit I take it for granted that He was filled with the same Spirit throughout His life. But the activity and presence of the Spirit was "within" Him during those first 30 years. At the Jordan, at the age of 30, the Spirit descended and came "upon" Him. The "coming upon" is as oil is poured out in the anointing of priests, kings or prophets. The very moment the Holy Spirit had descended on Jesus and remained with Him there was a complete difference in Jesus' life-style and demeanour. The Spirit of Yahweh had rested upon Him.



Probable sepulchre of Jesus –
called the Garden Tomb

Twenty-sixth Advent Meditation

Prophecy

Will be buried in a rich man's tomb

(Isaiah 53:9)

Fulfilment

Was buried in the tomb of Joseph, a rich
man from Arimathea

(Matthew 27:57-60; John 19:38-42)

Gently and reverently they removed with their own hands the body of Jesus from the cross. Their tears of sympathy fell fast as they looked upon His bruised and lacerated form. Joseph owned a new tomb, hewn in a rock. This he was reserving for himself; but it was near Calvary, and he now prepared it for Jesus. The body, together with the spices brought by Nicodemus, was carefully wrapped in a linen sheet, and the Redeemer was borne to the tomb. There the three disciples straightened the mangled limbs, and folded the bruised hands upon the pulseless breast. The Galilean women came to see that all had been done that could be done for the lifeless form of their beloved Teacher. Then they saw the heavy stone rolled against the entrance of the tomb, and the Saviour was left at rest. The women were last at the cross, and last at the tomb of Christ. While the evening shades were gathering, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary's lingered about the resting place of their Lord, shedding tears of sorrow over the fate of Him whom they loved. "And they returned, . . . and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment." Luke 23:56.



Twenty-seventh Advent Meditation

Prophecy

He will judge the earth with
righteousness (Isaiah 11:4,5)

Fulfilment

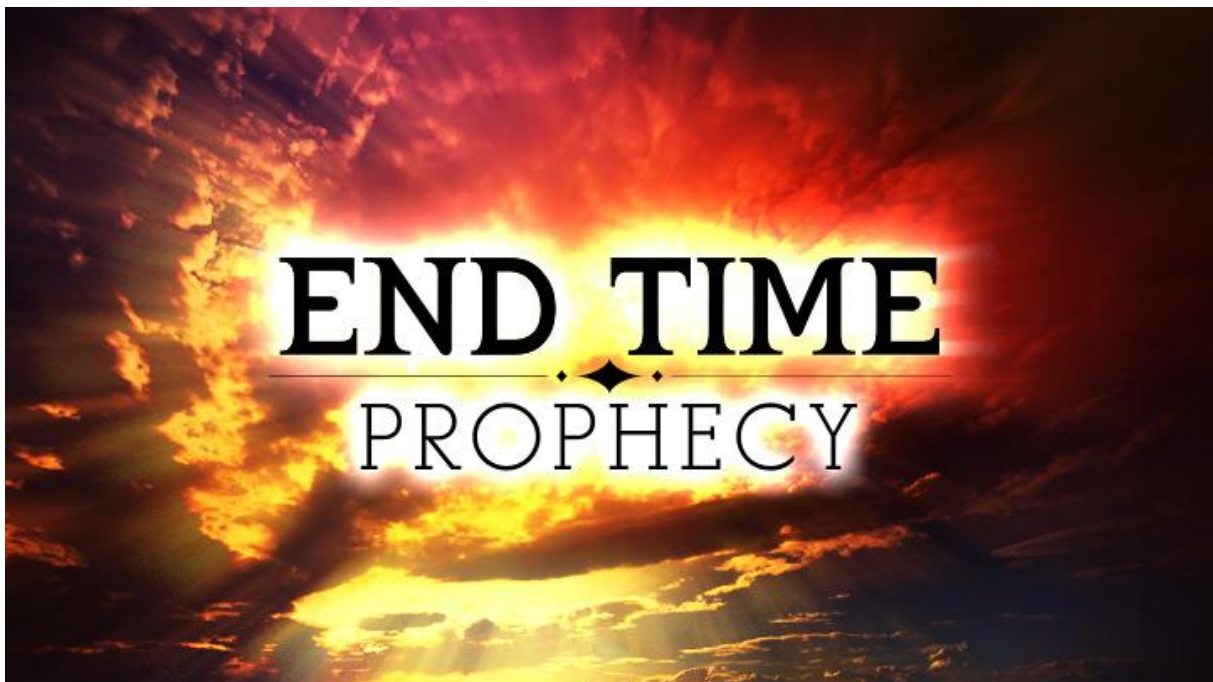
Jesus was given authority to judge (John
5:27; Luke 19:22; 2 Timothy 4:1,8)

When a person is Spirit-dependent, he will live life differently. Although we might treat Isaiah 11:3-5 as only applying to the life of the Saviour Jesus Christ, we are expected to make the logical conclusion that if we share in the anointing, then we share in the works that stem from that anointing. We are Christ's disciples. The disciple of Christ not only has his Master's knowledge but also power. God's true servant, though, finds God's goodness expressed through the cautious spirit given to a man that causes him to observe God's command and seek His blessing. He refrains from disobedience out of fear of the coming consequences. God is real in His life. Like the reigns of a horse, the fear of the Lord control and lead the Christian into the most effective and fulfilled life possible. Righteous judgment and decisions come from living by God's Word rather than by one's subjective judgment. The ordained and counsellors who deny their subjects the truth of God are false prophets. The spirit of the world steps and interferes with God's judgments. So the seeker (*client*) walks away without God's principles guiding his life. Those filled with God's Spirit will be men of righteousness and faithfulness. God's Word will dictate their actions, decisions and words rather than the spirit of the world. We see this so clearly in Christ's life as well as those who have been near Him.



Are you ready for Christmas? Will you make it until next week? Are you prepared for the coming of Christmas? Nowadays the real meaning of Christmas is forgotten. If the coming of Jesus Christ is included at all in the average society, Jesus gets no further than Bethlehem, and remains frozen in time as a "babe in the manger." In his manhood, the babe died for us all on the Cross, shedding His

blood for each and everyone. He also left the earth visibly to the Father, and is one day soon, relying on the present signs of time, coming back the way He left, as prophesied by Himself and the Prophets. The events of the first Christmas are history indeed, but they are prophecy as well, and we are all in the story somewhere. Why not accept the Lord as Saviour today and cleanse all sin from your life and your entry into heaven is secure. Jesus' sacrifice renders you blameless before God in the Great Day of Judgment (Rev. 20:12). You can be in front of two different Judgment Seats. The Beam Seat of Christ, where the saved are given their eternal rewards, and with it, eternal life or at the Great White Throne Judgment, where the only judgment is to be separated from Jesus Christ for eternity. In fact, no one knows the day Christ will return. The end your chance to be saved can come anytime because no one has any guarantee that they will live beyond tomorrow. Die without Christ and the end is now. Ready or not, Jesus is coming again! **Maranatha! Merry Christmas!**



As Christian believers we have been charged with the Great Commission. In this Jesus gives us His own personal promise that He will be with us right up until the very end of this evil age. Why then would we want to 'skip out' ahead of time?

And why would we even begin concoct a plan to abandon the race and our commission seven years earlier than the finish line? This, dear friends, is precisely what the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine is trying to do. It is not just coddling you. It is attempting to cut you off from your glorious end-time destiny in Christ.

Even a child, if he or she loves God, can read the Bible and understand what God is doing at the climax of this age. In Messiah's coming kingdom we are told that "a little child will lead them." - Isa.11:6 Better a little child than many grown men who have compromised themselves with the powers of this world and with Mammon. Unfortunately we have been to blame here too. We have leaned upon our popular religious leaders to see and teach things our way. Both the Bible prophecy teachers and the people in the pews have sought to impose our man centred humanistic pre-suppositions on the end-time scriptures. We have tried to get the Bible to say what we want it to say. Of course we have done this for well meaning political and economic reasons. No one likes to become unpopular in their society and snubbed by their peers. The modus operandi has been "If the people want a pre-tribulation rapture, then let us give it to them".

But all these compromises to the true Bible prophecy picture of the end time have had an unfortunate result. The eschatological jigsaw puzzle has been turned into a confusing mess. Pieces of the puzzle have been scattered, even lost or "hidden" away. Some pieces have been jammed together where they don't belong. People are discouraged by Bible prophecy. It has become fashionable to say that eschatology "cannot be understood". We hear that a lot.

But this is not true. End time Bible prophecy is not complicated. But in the hands of profane men, some of whom were freemasons, God's Holy Word has been obfuscated. The end time truth has been "cloaked" or hidden behind a gnostic religious smokescreen. It is under a "conspiracy of silence" and a concerted campaign of disinformation.

All professing Christians should be diligently and prayerfully studying God's Word daily, especially as we get near the end of time

... Acts 17:11 ...'These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.' ...

This is what we true Christians should be doing. Especially in these end times, we should be receiving the Word with eager hearts and searching the

Bible 'daily', to make sure we are on the right path. How will we know if we are living in the Bible end times, if we don't study the Word of God?

How will we know what the mark of the beast is if we don't study? This is so important! How will you know if you're being deceived if you don't study the Bible and seek after the truth? The whole point of being deceived is that you won't know about it! Satan is doing all he can to water down the truth of God's Word, and to stop people from studying and learning about the end times.

... Revelation 1:3 ...'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.' ...

The book of Revelation (the last book in the Bible) reveals we will get a blessing by studying Bible prophecy and by keeping those things which it reveals.

The **Bible end times** are right here in 2014 ending! And we are living right before the second coming of Christ Jesus, when He will burst upon this world in glory with all His holy angels. Look out for the truth about the end times and Bible prophecy.

Today we are living in a time like no other! The scoffers can mock all they like about earthquakes, wars and famine being with us for hundreds of years. But the fact of the matter is, if you take into account **ALL the signs**, you will see we are living in a time like no other before us! Are you ready?

Friend, this is a very important hour we live in. The adversary has come down with "great power and fury" and we **MUST** strive hard to press on into the Kingdom of God. We have a mighty foe to battle with, but an even **MIGHTIER** protector in Christ Jesus to help us! If we fix our eyes firmly on the present truth and have our hope cast **WITHIN** the Most Holy Place where Christ Jesus now resides, judging the world, then any winds of false doctrine and error will not move us. We will not be moved by worldly excitement and false revivals because we have followed our Master, Teacher, Saviour and Friend into the Most Holy Place in the heavenly sanctuary, where His people are being judged right now (1 Peter 4:17). This is a solemn time of soul searching and turning away from sin. Are you ready to stand before a Holy God?

The Bible truth can be hard to find today in these end times, because it is being trampled down and replaced with lies by Satan and his followers, which

has caused a "falling away" from the Bible truth since the early Church, which Paul spoke about in *2 Thessalonians 2:3*:

... 'Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed.'

...

Through this gradual "falling away" many Christians have lost touch with the Truth of God's Word in the Bible and have accepted false end times prophecy teachings, which is why we are here to shine that true light again. Are you preparing yourself for the end time trial that is to fall upon the people of God, and to meet your coming Lord and Saviour? Are you watching for the signs of the times and studying Bible prophecy? I hope so, because time is running out and we need to be prepared!

Be on your guard!

Unfortunately this is going to happen to a lot of Christians. Our Apostle Paul has warned us that there will indeed be a great 'falling away', even a great **apostasy**. – 2 Thes.2:3, John 5:43, Dan.9:27

Religious humanism and liberalism are not just a matter of unscriptural and incorrect doctrine. As a people we are driven by our religious fantasies as I had among my clergy from 1974 to 2010, inventing all sorts of unbiblical situations to please the public and their own aspirations and liberties. We are no longer people who worship idols of clay. But we do erect and set up concepts in our minds. They become our idols. And so we worship these fantasies rather than searching the scriptures and turning our eyes to God. Our 'feelings' about what "we want to believe" are set up as idols over and above the Holy Scriptures. This is what has happened with the Pre-Tribulation rapture. It is a fantasy we have erected. And we haven't had or taken the time to check it out with the scriptures. This is to our shame. And if the matter is not attended to with all diligence it will be to our loss.

God has a wonderful plan for His people in the End times. We are called to be His witnesses before kings and rulers. The Holy Spirit, (contrary to what we have been told), will be with us. He will take us right through the 70th week and into the end-time glory. There is a great and wonderful adventure and the romance in God ahead of us. Can we stick with Him?

The End of Time Drama

God's people in scripture are not just spectators. They are in fact portrayed as a woman betrothed to God. - Hosea, Rev.12 etc. The woman's antagonist is the

dragon, who is Lucifer or Satan. The Woman and the Dragon must face each other as they enter the final contest of the ages. This final drama was even seen by the patriarchs thousands of years ago. They looked up at the night skies and saw the redemption story laid out for them pictorially in the stars and constellations. The woman, God's people, will escape from the face of the Dragon. - Rev.12, Micah 2:12-13 At the end of the Millennium the dragon will be cast into the Lake of Fire. - Rev.20

What begins the end-time drama? The answer is very simple. Global crises will come along requiring global crisis management. This in turn will call for a global crisis manager. He will need and will demand the authority to act decisively as a one man superpower or in effect, a man-god. Humanistic mankind will see what their dreams are made of here. Only they have denied the true Messiah. So their dreams will turn out to be nightmares.

This world has not had global leadership since Roman times. But a world government will surely come. The power broker will actually achieve wide and popular acceptance around the world. A global peacemaker, if he is going to do anything, will have to have authority. He must have sovereign powers vested in him by the G-7 nations. At the time of the coming crises the major nations will have all been trying (unsuccessfully) to deal with the critical issue of world peace. It therefore follows that this leader will have to enter into a power sharing treaty with the G-7 nations, Israel, and the church, just to name a few. This deal, outlined for us in Dan.9:27 will be term limited to seven years. The world will come to believe that he is the man who can get the job done. He will even establish and license global religion for the New World Order, taking for himself a harlot religious consort. This harlot will be the beginning of trials and tribulations for God's covenant people during the first half of the 70th Week, the final seven years of this age.

If 'established religion' is to be preserved during the first half of the 70th week Harlot Church will be riding a ten horned beast.

The clash between the Eternal Covenant of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the covenants of men is inevitable. It is an overhanging future reality. This climactic contest must eventually be expressed in history. The Bible tells us how. It will come with the epic 7 year covenant Daniel prophesied in Dan. 9:27. The prophesied drama of the end time will unfold as an impossible love triangle between God's people, (the woman betrothed to YHVH God), and two princes. She cannot have both of them. They are engaged in a spiritual war against each other. So she must choose one or the other.

This period is a time of decision and high drama. It will involve many trials, tribulations and awesome moments of self discovery. This will turn out to be the quintessential story of "Beauty and the Beast". And like Gomer, enclosed by thorns, God's Judeo-Christian people, corporately speaking, will finally come to their moment of decision. Afterward, when they realize that they have chosen the wrong prince, they will find themselves in tribulation. This is just as Moses, back in the Torah, said would happen. - Deut.4:30 Oh yes, Moses made his contribution to end-time prophecy.

God will bring His people, all of them, to a place where they must make a choice. It will be a choice for Him. Or for the kingdoms of this world. Awesome times lie up ahead. There, in the Valley of Achor, a special spiritual place, God's called out "ekklesia"/congregation will begin to remember the God they left behind. Amnesia will be replaced by remembrance. They will remember their true Husband, their Beloved, the One from whom they became separated when they wandered off into this evil world. - Hos.2:14-23 And in the valley of decision God's people will come seeking the way to Zion. - Jer.50:4-5 And as armies gather at Armageddon and begin to surround Jerusalem the whole Jewish nation will be in their final extremis. At that time they will remember the One whom they had formerly rejected. And they will cry out to Him in repentance. Will He answer? Oh yes He will! At that very day they will remember their Messiah, the One they pierced. At last they will find their spiritual and national salvation in Him. - Zech.12:7-13:1

What will emerge from all this is a glorious reunion of all the household of God. God will have re-gathered all His jewels. -Mal 3:16 It will be the climax of an epic love story between God and all His regathered people, a huge worldwide company from both houses of Israel. -Rev 7. What a day that will be! The fellowship between God and man will be restored. A fountain for cleansing will spring forth from Jerusalem, and the creation will again begin to realize the beauty it once knew. This is the future glory revealed to us in end-time Bible prophecy.

Why will tribulation come? Is God unfair? The truth is that we, the called out congregation of God, bring the tribulation upon ourselves. We fancy that we can 'double deal' with our God. God owns our souls and the land of Israel. And yet we figure we can "two time" the God of Israel and make 2 covenants with two opposing rulers and still live on in peace? This is foolishness.

Wisdom, as a woman, is crying out to us in the streets and at the gates and in the open square. -Prov.1 She is crying out to us to turn from our pathway of compromise and choose the pathway of wisdom. But we are not listening. -

Prov.1:20-33 Our true Prince is the Prince of Israel. He is the Prince of Peace. So our spiritual dealings should be made in holiness with Him and Him alone.

We serve a holy God. And we have have one primary allegiance. It is the covenant we have with the God of Israel. The Holy One of Israel became incarnate, taking on flesh to come into this world. His name is Jesus or Yeshua which name means 'Savior'. He came to us as the ultimate Sacrifice Lamb. He bought us salvation with His shed blood, the blood of the Everlasting Covenant. - Heb.13:20, Oh yes, there is another prince that will come. But he has "no regard for the God of his fathers". - Dan.11:37 He comes in his 'own name'. (John 5:43) This prince of the Dan. 9:27 covenant is the coming false messiah. As a peacemaker he will call for the nations to sign on with his 7 year covenant. Christian nations should have no dealings with this man! But they will. The scriptures tell us that God's people, those in Christendom and in Israel will sign his 7-year deal. This will initiate the final week, (7 years), of the 70 Weeks of Daniel. - Dan.9:24-27 He will come in as smooth operating peacemaker. - Dan. 9:27A But in the middle of the 7 years he will be possessed and revealed as the antichrist, the son of perdition/hell. - Dan.9:27B

Our God is a loving God. His desire is to draw His people back to Him. But we, the Judeo-Christian people, are the ones responsible for all this mess. We are the ones who are the two timers. We are the ones who fancy that we can cut a covenant with heaven and hell at the same time. When this shady Dan.9:27 deal eventually leads on to the 'abomination of desolation' three and a half years later and half way into the 70th week our guardian angel, Michael, will be in a very awkward position indeed. He, and God's people as well, will face the final epic spiritual battle of the ages. -Dan. 12:1 And how are we implicated in all this? Because **we** loosed those dark forces ourselves! Jesus Himself said "What you bind and loose on earth will be bound or loosed in heaven." We have sowed to the wind. The time will come when we shall reap the whirlwind. Through all this God is calling out to His people to return to Him. He is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance". -2Pet.3:9

As usual we are inclined to blame others, even God, for our misfortunes. But the coming tribulation is all our own doing. Moses himself told us this way back at the beginning in the "Song of Moses". He said that in the latter days we would become prosperous and as in times past we would depart from the faith, making compromises and unfaithful alliances. This would bring us into tribulation in the latter days. - Deut.4:30 Jesus said the same in the Olivet Discourse. All these prophecies apply to the true church as well as to the Jewish nation because we as wild olive branches are grafted into the Olive tree of Israel. - Rom.11 Our Apostle Paul said that "If we are Christ's we are Abraham's seed and heirs

according to the promise." -Gal.3:29 Our new identity as born again Christians is in the commonwealth or citizenship of Israel. - Eph. 2:12-13 So Israel and the church will come into the very same crucible of the end-time as laid out in Bible prophecy. **Both** of us will sign on with the coming false messiah. -John 5:43 It will be the penultimate quintessential story of 'Beauty and the Beast'.

This is an awful truth but we must face it. Jesus warned us that no man can serve two masters. -Mat.6:24 Yet we shall make this covenant with a false messiah. We shall cut the covenant in a similar manner as the established church made covenant when they sat down at table with the Roman Caesar at Nicaea in 325 A.D. Only this time the church's political lover, her champion, this "prince" will make no pretence of being "Defender of the faith". He's out for number one! And he has the **power!** He wants us to sit down and covenant with him!

How shall we respond?

Power, either spiritual or temporal, carries with it an awesome responsibility. We enter into power by treaty or by covenant with someone who is mightier than we are. The established church, like Gomer, wife of Hosea, is a damsel in distress. She is estranged from her true husband and all alone. She has therefore become obsessed with finding power, protection, safety and security with her lovers, the princes and powers of this world. God's people of the church, like Gomer, have typically chosen thorny champions to protect them politically. These princes have been secretly at war against the Prince of Israel all along. But now, the plot is thickening. To their dismay, Gomer discovers that her champion, her political prince is beginning to turn against her Judeo-Christian God and herself! Her prince, the one in whom she had trusted is beginning to turn into a toad. Now Gomer, (Israel and the Church), is in trouble. - Hosea & Rev. 12 What will she do now? This is the drama and the divine romance of end-time Bible prophecy.

Very few Christians are aware of this drama being played out. Fewer still have been informed of their vital role of witness as the play of the ages comes to its climax and its appointed conclusion. But now the curtain is about to go up. Do they know their lines? Are they aware of their future role?

This theme of an estranged woman who finally goes out in search of her absent lover and Betrothed is the central drama in the Song of Songs/Solomon. There is a similar theme in the message of Jesus to the Church at Laodicea. -Rev.3:14-22 Jesus is standing at the door knocking. Will she open to Him and invite Him in? Indeed these themes are woven throughout the whole Bible. It is the basis for the end-time drama. It is a wrenching love triangle. **Gomer** as God's Judeo-

Christian people is still out there lost. She is still shackled up with her lovers in the wilderness. Except for her Sunday reveries she has almost forgotten her true Prince and husband. The church has wandered away from her true Husband. She has become a wild thing, a wild branch in fact. She prefers her forceful thorny earthy lovers to the Prince of Israel who appears somewhat ethereal and unreal to her. She only perceives him through a mirror, a window of religious tapestry and stained glass. She doesn't really know Him in a real and personal way. Walking by faith in God by the comfort/power and guidance of His Spirit is an unknown reality for her at this point. She has yet to really know her Betrothed. And she is not yet ready to trust Him in a passage through this world. But she will.

Right now Gomer is 'busy' in the world with all her allegiances. She is a very popular girl. Ecumenical roundtables, politics of the left and right, military power and financial power have all become the pre-occupation of many Christian denominations today. This obsession by the church with temporal power is exactly the same as it was during the crusades 900 years ago. The established church has left her first love. Her devotion to the God of Israel is vague and tenuous. Like the Lady of Shalott she is still going after her "Lancelot". She is obsessed with his sword. And so the Word of God has been lost to her. In a final vision the poet sees her singing her last mournful song as she drifts down the river towards the city of Camelot/Babylon. This is an awesome and fearful spectre. God is calling His people back to Himself. Shall we answer His call?

Like Israel of old, the church has gone after her lovers. And why? Because she is just as self centered as the earthy princes she goes to bed with. This is not new. Earthly power is a dark spiritual aphrodisiac for those in love with the things of this world. Temporal earthly power has been and still continues to be the main devotion of the established church. This has been the case since the Church "went up" to meet the Caesar Constantine at the Council of Nicaea back in 325 A.D..

The dark angels behind Rome and the powers of this world with which the Church has made covenant are not Christian. They are in fact anti-Israel and anti-Semitic. Furthermore they have an appetite for blood. Roman Catholic scholar James Carroll has written a well documented and very telling book on this subject entitled Constantine's Sword.

The endtime play will see the presentation before the watching world of two princes. One will be the Messiah, the coming Prince of Israel. The other will be a false messiah, a pretender, and a usurper. This other prince, this false messiah

will not come in the Father's name. He will come in **his own name**. Yet we, as God's Judeo-Christian people, will receive this selfist/Luciferian prince to our bosom. Why? Because we will think that he has the 'saving power'. This is a very 'hard saying'. But this 7 year covenant with a false messiah, an earthy deal with prince who comes in his **own name**, is prophesied to happen. It will surely come to pass. This was spoken of in detail by Jesus Christ Himself. See John 5:43. That very crisis of Dan.9:27 will set the trumpets blowing. - Joel 2:1 At that point in time, at some awesome future Rosh Hashanah, (Jewish New Year), the ultimate Feast of Trumpets will erupt into history. On that epic day we shall **know** for a certainty that we have entered the 70th week. The final seven years of this present evil age will have just begun. This is the time the prophet Daniel declared would be the seven year time period God has determined for dealings with His covenant people. Then, at the end of the age, on the day after the final day to repent, the Day of Atonement, He will send evil angels to gather the tares, to destroy the wicked. The nations that remain will be dealt with at the sheep-goat judgement.

The real question is this. Do we want to hear all this? For most people, and even amongst the people who honour our God, the answer is 'no'. Our heart commitment is still very much tied to this world. The fleshpots of Egypt and the humanistic culture and materialistic marketplaces of Babylon still draw us away. And the myriad covenants we have made with this world system still bind our hearts. So the result is what we see in the west today. Our many worldly covenants keep us from going into a deeper covenant walk with our God. The eventual result of this wanton neglect is inevitable. Whether we like it or not, the Judeo-Christian people will come to their time of crisis. The time will come when they will have to make their choice. It may be sooner. Or it may be later. But the day of reckoning must come. Why? Because we are the engine of history. We are the covenant congregation of YHVH, the God of Israel. Because of the Eternal Covenant we have entered into our witness to that covenant is essential. When all is said and done our final witness will be heard. We cannot run away from our destiny. Our God will not allow it. He loves us too much for that.

We must face the facts here. We are a wayward people and even as Judeo-Christian people we still full of tricks. Like our father Jacob, we too as a corporate people will come to that 'dark night of the soul'. It has been our wanton hearts and our shady dealings that have in fact lead us into the crisis of the end-time. As we come into the end time we shall wrestle with our God even as our patriarch Jacob did before he prepared to cross over the Jabbok river to go on towards the promised land. Many evangelicals are wrestling with God right now. We take Him to task over the whole question of why the church needs to

be present on earth in the end-time. We don't like the idea. It sounds uncomfortable. We think we have a "special deal" absolving us from involvement. But God is not mocked. We shall reap what we have sown. And God will yet again call His people to account.

Many trials, decisions, discoveries and new resolves lie ahead of us. Crucial issues will be decided up ahead in that Valley of Achor/tribulation. At that very place we shall rediscover and "know" our God. And at that very place of 'trouble', the place in which YHVH/God said "Lo ammi", "not my people", God's covenant people will remember who they are. They will enter into the divine romance, even with the One who is our "Ishi". - Hos.2:14-23 In that surrender to God they will bring the final witness of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ/Yeshua Hamashiach. When the New Covenant is witnessed events in the spirit realm will quickly turn around. Our Christian faith, which is based on the Abrahamic covenant, is in actual fact 'blood covenant Christianity'. Holy history awaits our decision and our signature of witness. When we have signed and brought our corporate witness to that eternal covenant things will then begin to happen. Our God will act on our behalf out of the blessings of the covenant we have just signed. The Holy Spirit, the Ruach Hodesh will engulf God's elect people in unprecedented waves of glory. -Joel 2:28-32 And when our brothers and sisters in the Jewish nation finally repent nationally and are saved at Armageddon then Christ will return at the Mount of Olives. Our Messiah will also return as "The Breaker". He will unshackle His people who have been penned up in Esau's sheepfolds of Bozrah. - Micah 2:12-13 And so He will lead **all** His people out and into the glory of His Kingdom. What a story! And to think that this spellbinding part of the end time drama has been covered up!

What can we say about all this? Great adventures in God lie ahead. There is that final leg of the race to be run. We shall run that final leg on behalf of all the saints who have gone before us. -Heb.12:1 End time Bible prophecy shows God calling His people out to Him just as He has always done. The shofars will sound and the Feast of Trumpets will announce His Kingdom. -Joel 2:1 And at the end of the 7 years that final Day of Atonement will issue forth the last call to those are still undecided. Then God's judgement will fall on the wicked.

In the days to come history will call upon all of us to choose. We shall have to choose between being "sold out" to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob or "selling out" to the princes of this present world system. The mark of the beast will be offered to those who will worship the beast. By this blood covenant initiation the wicked will enter into the financial system of '666'. And the righteous will seek the face of their God. The time of "Jacob's trouble" will arrive on our doorstep precisely on time and as prophesied. -Jer.30:7 We, the

church, along with national Israel, shall be in the midst of it. It will truly be a time of testing and refining. The curtain will go up on the end-time drama as they saints go up to witness. And God's elect will take centre stage before the watching world. The dross will be discarded. Zech.13:9, Mal.3:2-3 The gold will flow from the crucible. And the glory of God will be seen on earth before a cloud of witnesses, even of angels and men.

Here is a word of encouragement. We may enter tribulation because of the choices and covenants we have made in this world. But if we are in Christ/Messiah we are **not** under God's wrath. – 1 Thes. 5:9 God's enemies are! **They** are the ones that will experience the wrath of God. Messiah will save Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem at the Battle of Armageddon.-Zech.12:7 End times Bible prophecy involves a magnificent deliverance story for God's elect. It will also be a time of wrath for those who hate God and His people and who reject His great salvation. -Heb.2:3

Here is the good news in end time Bible prophecy. God has a magnificent future awaiting those who call upon His Name. His divine purpose will surely be seen as future holy history unfolds.

So where do we see all this in scripture? Details of apocalypse were seen by Daniel and many of the Old Testament prophets. The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation and much of the New Testament is end times Bible prophecy. The holy scriptures declare that the God of Israel fully intends to personally re-gather **all** of His lost sheep who at the present time are dispersed out among the heathen nations. He will judge between the sheep and the goats. - Mat. 25:31-46 And He will bring His sheep back home to the mountains of Israel. -Ezekiel 34:11-17. Then under the Throne of David He will restore them to the land and the Kingdom of Israel in peace. Here are just some of the many wonderful promises YHVH/God has given us in the Old Testament. He spoke them through the Hebrew prophets over two and a half millennia ago. They will surely come to pass. Perhaps these awesome and magnificent events might even open up in our lifetime. Shouldn't we then consider it a priority to prepare our heart for Messiah? Shall we repent and turn from our own ways? Shall we invite Him into our heart? Shall we open ourselves up to His gracious rule in our life?

At last, many of the prophecies recorded in the Bible have already come to pass. Many more remain to be fulfilled at the end of this present age, before Christ's return to earth and after. As we study this important part of Scripture, we need to keep in mind several important principles:

The prophets of the Bible wrote as they were inspired to do so by God. In other words, no prophecy in the Bible came from any individual writer's personal ideas, but rather by God's direct inspiration.

Fulfilled prophecy gives us confidence that God is real and that He will fulfill what He has said about the future. Since prophecies of world-ruling empires and even the name of a specific ruler long before his birth have all come to pass, we know the rest of the Bible's prophecies will likewise come to pass.

Prophecy motivates us to have faith in God that is demonstrated by obedience to His laws. Because so many judgments are coming upon peoples and nations because of disobedience to God's law, we discover that a proper understanding of God's grace will inspire us to live godly lives.



What must I do to be saved?

You are not saved by your good deeds. You are not saved by being a member of a church. You are not saved by being sincere. You are not saved by your intelligence.

What must you do? You must believe in Jesus alone; you must trust Him alone; you must accept Jesus' sacrifice for your sins alone and nothing that you do in any way.

Though there are no rules or steps to becoming a Christian, the following is a Biblical summarization of what you need to know and do:

You must recognize your sinfulness before God:

1. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned". (Romans 5:12)
2. You must recognize that your sin has caused a separation between you and God:
"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." (Isaiah 59:2)

You must believe that Jesus is the only way to God:

"I am the way, the truth, and the Life, and no one comes to the Father but by Me." (John 14:6)

3. You must ask Jesus to forgive you of your sins because He has the authority to forgive you of your sins:

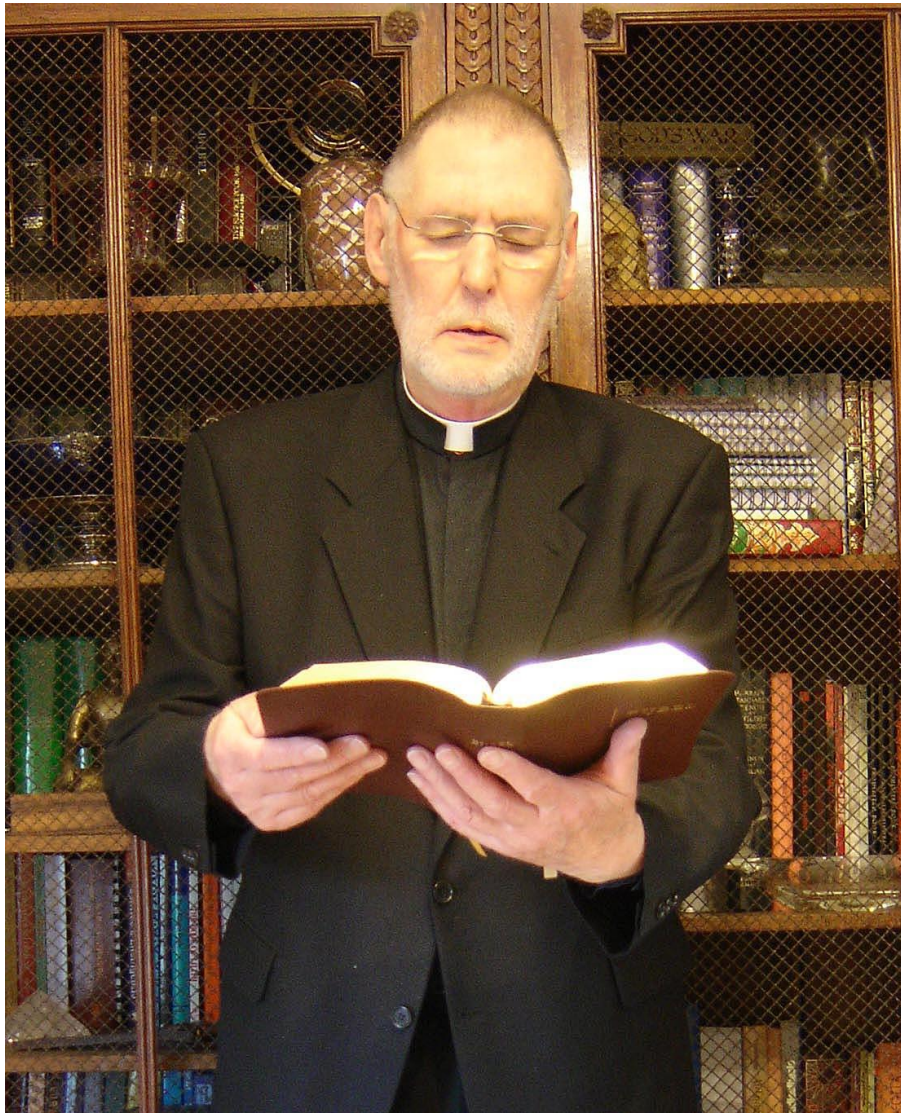
"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me'". (Matthew 28:18) Jesus told you to ask Him for your requests: "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it". (John 14:14) Jesus is the one who forgives sins: "But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins -- He said to the paralytic, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home'." (Mark 2:10-11)

4. You must receive Jesus. John 1:12 says, "Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

5. You must turn away from your sin

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30); and to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matthew 3:8).

If you want to be saved you must accept Jesus as your Saviour. Pray to Him and ask Him to forgive you of your sins and come into your heart. He will because He loves you.



**Reverend Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D.
Ordained at first in France, March 1974**

Salvation is only a prayer of faith away.

If you believe these things, you can pray a prayer like the one below, to receive Jesus into your life, keeping in mind that merely saying a prayer in itself does not save you, for prayer is not like a magic charm or incantation. Only faith in Jesus Christ alone saves.

"Father in heaven, I come to you confessing that I am a sinner, completely lost and without hope. I repent of my sinful ways and ask for Your forgiveness. I believe in my heart that Christ Jesus is the Son of God, that He completely paid for all of my sins by His death on the cross, and that You raised Him from the dead. I confess that Jesus is my Saviour and Lord. I trust in Him, and Him alone,

for my salvation. I believe that through His shed blood I have eternal life. I will pray, study, meditate and live by Your Word the rest of my life. Father, I ask that You fill me with the Holy Spirit. Please come into my heart and save and sanctify my soul. I love you, Lord, and offer myself to You completely and without reservation. In the precious name of Jesus I pray. Amen."

If you prayed a prayer like this and meant it with all your heart, **YOU ARE SAVED!** You have been "born again" spiritually as a child of God. Your sins have been washed away and you are a person with a new nature.

After receiving salvation, you should join a Christ-centred church that preaches the **gospel** and be baptized. You should also pray and read your Bible daily, and regularly assemble with fellow Christians at your church.

Suggestions for Christian Growth:

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. "The righteous man shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life, and to practice the following:

Go to God in prayer daily. (John 15:7)

Read God's Word daily (Acts 17:11); begin with the Gospel of John.

Obey God moment by moment. (John 14:21)

Witness for Christ by your life and words. (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8)

Trust God for every detail of your life. (1 Peter 5:7)

Holy Spirit -- allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness.

(Galatians 5:16-17; Acts 1:8)

God's Word instructs us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together." (Hebrews 10:25) Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside on the cold hearth and the fire goes out. So it is with your relationship with other Christians.

If you do not belong to a church or house church, do not wait to be invited. Take the initiative; call the pastor or the responsible of a nearby church or church house where Christ is honoured and His Word is preached. Start now, and make plans to attend regularly.

In the course of your new life in Jesus Christ, you will continually struggle with sin. Sometimes you will, in a moment of weakness, succumb to temptation and sin. Please do not lose hope or be discouraged. Know that you are not alone and that other Christians go through these struggles. The Apostle Paul faced the same thing in his walk with Christ. Of his life he said,

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not. For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want. But if I am doing the very thing I do not want, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good. For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:18-24)

But Paul does not leave it there. He goes on to say,

"Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin."

While you will always struggle with sin until the day the Lord comes to take you home to heaven, do not lose heart. If you turn to the Lord in repentance and confess your sins, He will forgive you and make you clean again. 1 John 1:9 says,

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

As a new child of God you can be assured of salvation. Salvation is not a "maybe" or an "I hope to be". It is a sure thing that is based on the promises of God's Word. The Apostle John said:

"And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:11-13)

Also as a new child of God you can share the same assurance that the Apostle Paul had:

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." (Philippians 1:6)

God bless you and Merry Christmas 2014

© December 2014 – Rev. Philippe L. De Coster, B.Th., D.D., Berea School of Theology and Ministries on Internet, Ghent, Belgium.



